

# Common Exotic Plants Of Stevens Pond



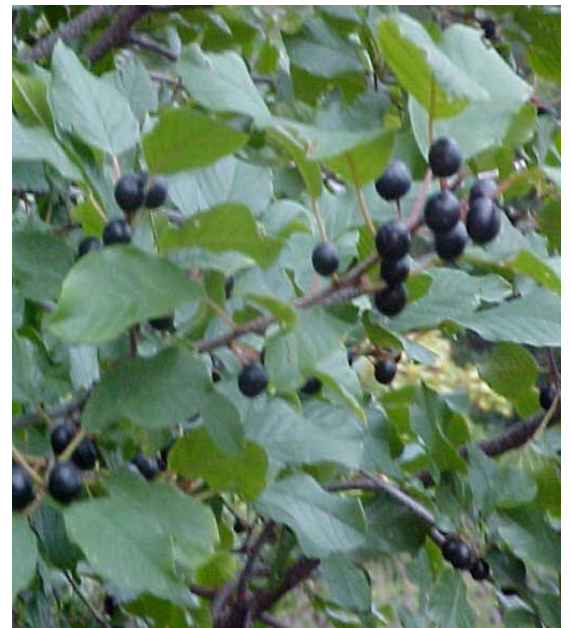
## Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)

Perennial herb with a square, woody stem and opposite or whorled leaves. Purple loosestrife flowers from July through August and is named for its bright purple flower spikes from the top of the plant. One plant may grow as an individual stalk or as several stalks clumped together. Purple loosestrife is native to Eurasia. It was originally introduced to eastern North America in the early to mid 1800's. This invasive plant was probably accidentally introduced via ship ballast or brought over for use as an ornamental plant. Optimum habitats include freshwater marshes, open stream margins, and alluvial floodplains. Purple loosestrife also occurs in wet meadows, river banks, and edges of ponds and reservoirs. It favors fluctuating water levels and other conditions often associated with disturbed sites, such as construction sites for docks or marinas. Purple loosestrife is often associated with cattail, reed canary grass, and other moist soil plants.



## Glossy Buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*)

Glossy buckthorn is a shrub or small tree that produces small dark fruits. These fruits occur singly or in small groups in leaf axils and contain a poisonous substance that probably deters many potential consumers, however, European Starlings can apparently eat the fruit with impunity and they have been suggested as the primary agent responsible for the spread of glossy buckthorn. Glossy buckthorn occurs in a range of wetland communities including fens, marshes, and bogs. Although the plant has a preference for wetlands, it also occurs in some upland habitats, such as forests, fencerows, wood edges, prairies, and old fields. When glossy buckthorn invades a natural area it displaces the native species by the dense shade produced by the stand.



## Common Reed (*Phragmites communis*)

Common reed has erect stems that grow up to 15 feet high and end in dense floral heads. These floral heads are purplish when young, and white or light brown and feathery when mature. Common reed's sharp, long, pointed green leaves grow up to 2 feet long and 2 inches wide. It flowers from late July through October. Stands of common reed disperse seeds, or pieces of underground stems, called rhizomes. Once established, stands grow predominately by sending up new shoots each spring from existing rhizomes, or from runners, called stolons. If an aerial shoot is knocked over, it can act like a rhizome, taking root and producing new shoots. This grass can return year after year, and some stands are believed to be 1,000 years old. Common reed grows in sunny, wetland habitats. It is found in fresh and alkaline marshes, pond margins, swamps, and ditches. Not only does it thrive in freshwater habitats but it can tolerate brackish waters as well. It is prevalent in wet areas that have disturbed or polluted soils. Human activities such as road and housing development have made the invasion of common reed quite successful in adjacent wetland areas.

